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REGIONAL GROWTH: HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

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This is the second in a series of issue papers prepared by the staff of the Association of Bay Area Governments. These papers are written and distributed to identify, clarify and stimulate consideration of issues crucial to the development of a regional growth policy for the Bay Area. Many conferences are held on each issue paper topic, reflecting the thoughts of ABAG member committees.

City growth  
Urban area  
Metro area  
Population

**"GROWING PAINS" ARE A SERIOUS PROBLEM**

BAY AREA RESIDENTS ARE RAPIDLY RECOGNIZING THAT CONTINUED POPULATION AND URBAN GROWTH IN OUR REGION PLACES INCREASING DEMANDS ON OUR CRITICAL RESOURCES.  
UNCHECKED, THIS GROWTH CAN ONLY JEOPARDIZE THE QUALITY OF LIFE WE NOW ENJOY.

Citizens and professionals responsible for local services are more and more focusing attention on development of rational future plans which will assure that life is still pleasant. On July 30, 1970, ABAG members adopted an initial Regional Plan to guide local and regional planning efforts. The Plan identifies, in general, urban and open space lands projected to the year 1990. It is based upon a population growth assumption of 7.5 million people by that year.

SINCE THE ADOPTION OF THE REGIONAL PLAN, REVISED AND MORE PRECISE PROJECTIONS OF RANGES OF POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH HAVE BECOME AVAILABLE FROM SEVERAL SOURCES.

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The new projections provide a basis for revising the regional plan growth assumptions. This is part of ABAG's responsibility to form a conscious regional growth policy.

## WHERE DOES GROWTH COME FROM?

Predicting future growth rates starts by studying the past. During the decade 1950-1960, Bay Area population increased by 35 percent (979,600 new people). During the 1960's, growth slowed to 26 percent (967,700 more people). Natural increase - the greater number of births than deaths - and migration into the Bay Area from other parts of the state, nation or the world, have accounted for our population growth over the past 20 years. Of these, migration is the more variable factor, as it is responsive to economic conditions. Over the last two decades, in-migration has contributed the largest share of the region's new population, but it decreased slightly in the 1960's. It is worth noting the special significance of foreign immigration to the Bay Area; in 1970, almost 53 percent (17,000) of the newcomers to this region were from foreign countries.

During the 1970's, it is expected that natural increase will account for 61 percent of regional population growth, while in-migration will contribute only 39 percent. Since 1963, when California's share of the nation's expenditures for aerospace employment dropped sharply, fewer people have come into the state and the Bay Area.

Economic expansion plays an important role in determining population growth. Many factors which influence industrial growth are beyond the control of local groups; the health of the national economy is an example. However, many other local policies, such as zoning, placement of utilities, and good accessibility to transportation systems do have an influence on industrial expansion. Growth due to immigration can thus be controlled effectively by limitations on industrial expansion.



Regional growth is also affected by boosts or cuts in federal, state and local spending. Finally, if a national policy to stabilize U.S. birth rates were enacted, such a policy would affect regional birth rates. It is doubtful, though, that regional growth policies could significantly change regional birth rates.

## POPULATION FORECASTS VARY

Various forecasts of population growth to the year 2000 have been made for the Bay Area. These forecasts range from aggressive growth to limited growth, with probable growth somewhere in-between.

Aggressive growth involves active encouragement in every way of rapid industrial expansion to achieve higher population growth rates than presently prevail. Under such policies, the Bay Area's present population of 4.6 million would swell to a range between 8.8 and 9.6 million by the year 2000, and the number of jobs available would grow between 2.0 percent and 2.4 percent each year.

The limited growth projection means slowing down the current rates of economic base expansion, but it does not imply stopping economic growth entirely. Some specific policy tools needed to achieve slower growth would be effective land use restrictions for certain kinds of industries, restrictions of services and accessibility, and new policies such as tax penalties and a state policy of restricting industrial growth to those areas where growth is deemed undesirable and encouragement in those areas where it is desired. Growth of employment would average between 0.4 percent and 0.9 percent per year, and regional population would be between 5.4 and 6.2 million people by the year 2000.

HOWEVER, BOTH THE AGGRESSIVE AND LIMITED GROWTH PROJECTIONS WOULD INVOLVE THE ABOVE DRAMATIC POLICY DECISIONS. SINCE COORDINATED LOCAL, REGIONAL, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES ON SUCH ISSUES HAVE NOT BEEN MADE, SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN PRESENT GROWTH PATTERNS ARE NOT LIKELY TO OCCUR IN THE NEAR FUTURE.



# Alternate Population and Employment Forecasts

San Francisco Bay Region

POPULATION

Population (Millions)

EMPLOYMENT

Semi-logarithmic  
1 cycle graph

9.6  
8.8  
7.5  
6.2  
5.4  
4.0  
3.6  
3.1  
2.6  
2.2

GROWTH RANGES  
Aggressive  
Probable  
Limited

MODERATE

## DATA SOURCE

Pop.	Source
9.6	State Department of Water Resources, 1968 (extrapolated to 2000).
8.8	State Department of Finance, April, 1972. Based on Census Bureau Series C fertility (2.78 births per woman during a lifetime), 300,000 annual State net migration, and current mortality rates.
7.5	State Department of Finance, September, 1971. Based on Census Bureau Series D fertility (2.45 births per woman during a lifetime), 150,000 annual State net migration, and current mortality rates.
6.2	State Department of Finance, April, 1972. Based on Census Bureau Series E fertility (2.11 births per woman during a lifetime), zero State net migration, and current mortality rates.
5.4	Center for the Continuing Study of the California Economy, 1972.

EMPLOYMENT - State Department of Human Resources Development and ABAG.



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The probable growth forecast, based on very recent studies of the California State Department of Finance, merits the greatest attention at this time. Probable growth for the Bay Area means that by the year 2000 our population will have increased to between 6.2 and 8.8 million people, and the number of jobs will grow by 0.9 percent to 2.0 percent each year.

## EXISTING LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES INDICATE PROBABLE GROWTH

There are several reasons for emphasizing the 'probable' growth range as the most useful for present planning efforts.

- Current federal tax policies, housing programs, state and federal development programs, zoning of excess vacant land for urban purposes, commitments to public facilities and investments, and local tax policies all ENCOURAGE GROWTH.
- Birth rates alone, if they continue according to State Department of Finance projections, will add far more people to the region than accounted for in the total population increase under the limited growth forecast.
- There does not yet exist a clear consensus of growth policy by local, regional, state, and federal governments that would change existing trends in population and urban development.

It is imperative that local, county and regional agencies and governing units cooperate to achieve a unified program for regional growth planning and control. It will take time for such a program to be organized. In the meantime, how do we go about preparing for the immediate future?

## HOW TO GUIDE SHORT-RANGE PLANNING

If existing trends continue, it can be reasonably predicted that the region's population will grow from it's present 4.6 million people to a total of 5.5 million people by 1980. It could grow at a slightly slower or faster rate, but the 5.5 million figure is a moderate one, taking into account the population projections to 1980 of each of the nine counties of the Bay Area, and of the California State Department of Finance.



POPULATION FORECASTS BY COUNTY: 1980, 1990, 2000  
San Francisco Bay Area

(Thousands)

County	1980		1990			2000				
	County Estimate	Moderate	County Estimate	Slow	Moderate	Rapid	County Estimate	Slow	Moderate	Rapid
Alameda	1263.0	1217.7	---	1221.6	1380.2	1493.6	---	1273.2	1510.7	1729.2
Contra Costa	689.1	689.1	852.4	733.7	852.4	942.9	988.7	792.0	988.7	1145.2
Marin	248.0	261.9	285.7	285.0	335.9	365.2	---	321.8	403.3	455.3
Napa	103.7	102.5	139.8	113.5	147.3	170.0	186.0	126.6	192.5	243.1
San Francisco	710.0	721.6	755.0	706.4	730.0	772.9	---	688.7	726.3	810.9
San Mateo	612.8	613.1	676.8	582.5	677.1	744.4	719.1	574.2	719.4	853.4
Santa Clara	1386.0	1386.6	1670.0	1561.0	1760.3	1918.6	---	1767.8	2103.1	2402.6
Solano	262.0	214.3	358.0	261.5	303.1	340.2	489.0	304.6	420.8	517.3
Sonoma	275.1	275.1	370.5	307.9	370.5	435.5	481.1	356.1	481.1	618.0
Bay Area	5549.7	5481.9	---	5773.1	6556.8	7183.3	---	6205.0	7545.9	8775.0

Source: County estimates from each county planning department. Slow, Moderate, and Rapid estimates from State Department of Finance, Population Research Section.



The estimate of 5.5 million people in 1980 reflects a population growth rate of 1.7 percent per year, compared to an average annual growth rate of 2.4 percent between 1960 and 1970. The growth rate of the 1970's is expected to be slower because of fewer migrants coming into the region and a lower level of fertility compared to that of the 1960's. The growth in the labor force will be absorbed by an anticipated employment increase of 1.4 percent per year, compared to an average annual growth rate of 3.3 percent between 1960 and 1970.

ABAG RECOMMENDS THAT FOR THE PURPOSES OF CONSISTENT PLANNING FOR REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION, WATER, AIR QUALITY AND OTHER IMPORTANT SERVICES, THE MODERATE 1980 POPULATION PROJECTION OF 5.5 MILLION PEOPLE BE RECOGNIZED.

Agreeing to a reasonably accurate 1980 population estimate is a tremendously important first step in the process of creating a viable regional growth plan as such a determination tends to become self-fulfilling.

- 1) The 5.5 million figure provides a basis for local agencies and governments to plan for expected urban growth levels in manageable stages.
- 2) This figure also permits local and regional agencies to set a ceiling on growth up to 1980, until such time as growth impacts on larger population levels has been determined.
- 3) The Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Regional Transportation Plan is now underway and should be completed in 1973. This single-purpose agency depends on ABAG for growth projections to guide its plans. Several billion dollars are involved. Although this planning effort will eventually require a long-range growth strategy to the year 2000, the immediate need is for a short-term population assumption. The 5.5 million population figure for 1980 fills this requirement and allows this program to allocate money for programs and capital improvements now.
- 4) In-depth studies of the environmental aspect of growth with respect to water quality (ABAG is currently participating in the planning efforts of the State Water Resources Control Board's San Francisco Basin Water Quality Management Plan) and air quality are underway (ABAG is negotiating a Memorandum of Agreement with the Bay Area Pollution Control District).



They both need a consistent growth rate and population forecast on which to base their planning assumptions. ABAG in turn needs feedback from them to insure that its growth rates do not violate water quality in the basin or exceed the air shed capacity.

- 5) Adopting this figure for interim planning to 1980 permits working time for study, debate, and decision-making on the major policy issues of a long-range regional growth plan.

## COORDINATION IS THE WATCHWORD

The key to making any planning process productive is concerted effort from all parties. ABAG members recognize this, and ABAG staff is prepared to provide every assistance needed by local and county planning departments to achieve worthwhile planning goals.

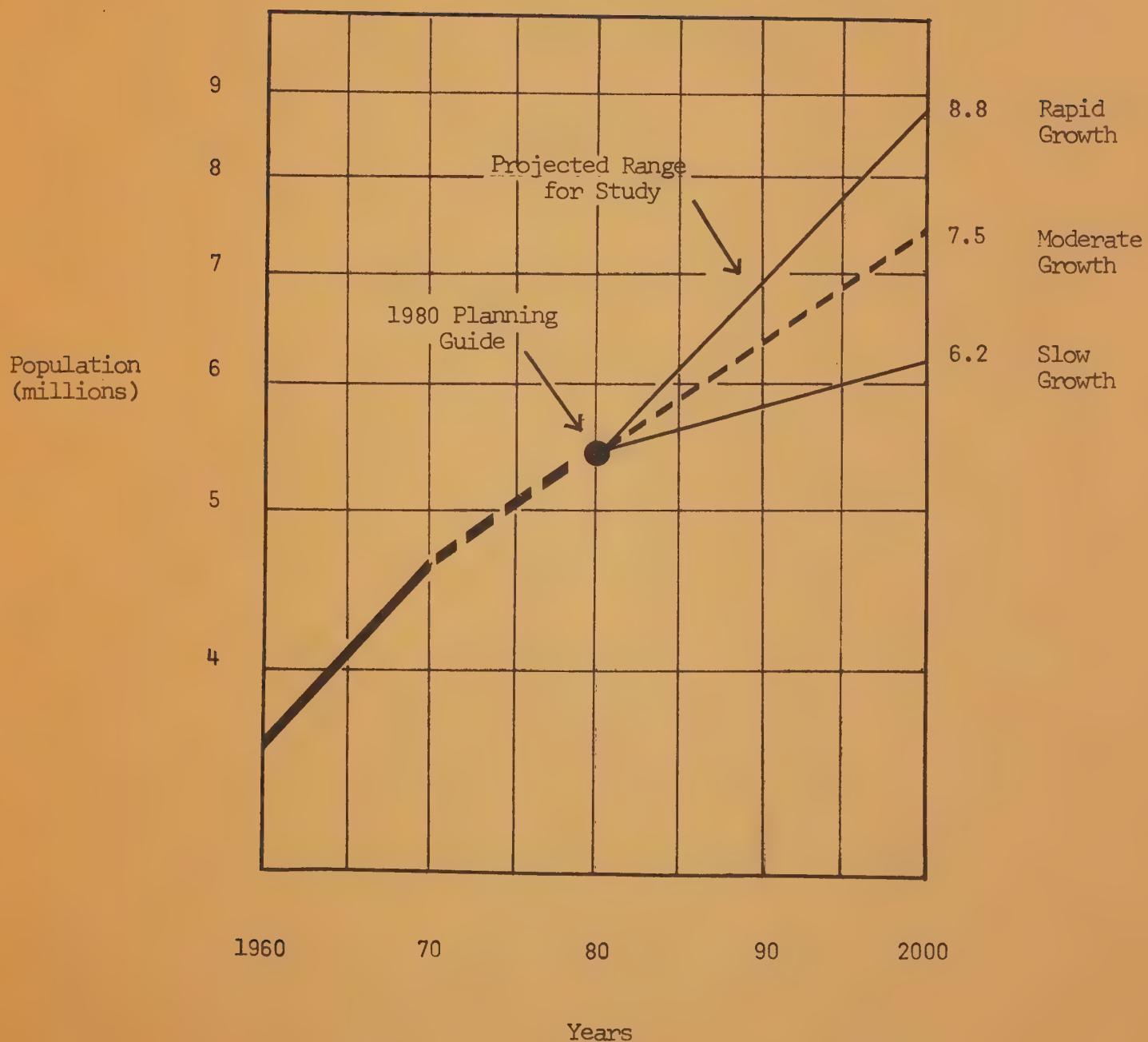
There are several concrete problems to overcome in the short- and long-range planning procedure. Most local planning agencies have a comprehensive land use plan to guide development decisions. For the most part, these plans propose urban and open space uses projected up to twenty years into the future. There has been little or no coordination of local planning efforts at a regional scale. The aggregation of local land use plans projects greater urbanization for the Bay Area than is realistic from regional forecasts.

Another problem is that most adopted land use plans do not show several stages for urban growth within a 20 to 30 year time frame. As a result, planning for costly public facilities and services is haphazard.

WHAT WE MUST DO IS ENCOURAGE EACH CITY TO TAKE A NEW LOOK AT ITS ESTIMATED GROWTH, RE-EXAMINE THE IMPACT, AND ALIGN ITS GROWTH PROJECTIONS TO THOSE OF ITS COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT, WHICH IN TURN SHOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH REGIONAL GROWTH



## FRAMEWORK FOR REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH





PROJECTIONS AND GOALS. Many times cities are competing for new growth, and this competition puts an enormous stumbling block in the way of sensible planning.

## DECISIONS NOW WILL AFFECT GROWTH AFTER 1980

While it is more difficult to affect growth rates in the region before 1980, policy decisions made in the next few years can have a crucial impact on what happens beyond 1980. We can say that the difference between slow, moderate, or rapid growth to the year 2000 is the difference between a low of 6.2 million and a high of 8.8 million people.

THREE GROWTH RATES TO STUDY WITHIN THE 'PROBABLE' GROWTH RANGE  
(Millions)

THREE GROWTH CHOICES	1980		1990		2000	
	Pop.	Jobs	Pop.	Jobs	Pop.	Jobs
SLOW	5.2	2.1	5.8	2.4	6.2	2.6
MODERATE	5.5	2.2	6.6	2.7	7.5	3.1
RAPID	5.6	2.3	7.2	3.0	8.8	3.6

To make informed decisions, it is important to study the implications of where in the region growth should occur and what effect it may have on housing quality and density, availability and location of jobs, and the quality of our environment. How important a role in society do we want to give the individual man? How well do we want him to live? Do we want a larger society, or do we want to limit growth and concentrate on improving existing communities?

## LET'S STUDY THE POLICY IMPACTS

Each of the possible growth rate choices before us would have a different effect on the region's resources and the costs of greater urban facilities and



services necessary to accommodate more people. Only when citizens and their elected decision-makers know these effects can they design an informed and desired course of action.

There are many specific ways of implementing a desired growth level. Some of the obvious ones are listed below. Although it is recognized that some are unacceptable, they are presented for purposes of discussion.

To encourage slow growth:

Restrict types and locations of industries by state and local zoning policies.

Initiate manpower programs to employ the locally unemployed rather than hiring workers from outside the region.

Provide tax incentives to families.

Encourage small families through free family planning clinics.

Impose tax penalties on undesirable industries, such as those that create environmental problems.

Limit densities for new housing developments and encourage the maximum amount of land to be retained in open space.

Restrict services (water, sewage, etc.) and accessibility by limiting transportation systems.

To encourage rapid growth, the opposite of the above policies should be pursued.

THE BAY AREA IS A VERY 'ORGANIZED' AREA. IN FACT, IT IS ALMOST OVERWHELMED BY ORGANIZATIONS FOR ONE SPECIAL PURPOSE OR ANOTHER, BUT NOWHERE DO WE HAVE A SENSE OF THE TOTAL PICTURE. THIS IS WHAT WE NOW MUST HAVE TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE.

ABAG is at present the region's only multi-purpose agency. It is therefore, the federally-designated Metropolitan Clearinghouse for the Bay Area. ABAG reviews and comments on applications from local jurisdictions for 101 different federal assistance programs from FHA-insured housing projects, to new sewer, water, highway and mass transit programs. ABAG sees many elements of fragmented urban growth and is concerned about placing them in a total planning framework. Through a coordinated effort each city, county, local special district and regional agency (such as the



Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the Air Pollution Control District, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission) can come together to design a comprehensive regional growth plan that is responsive to the major planning issues facing the region. Then each local unit and agency can assume particular responsibilities for carrying out its part of the total plan.

## EXAMINE THE PROBLEMS AND ALTERNATIVES. YOU MUST MAKE THE DECISIONS.

We can summarize the discussions in this issue paper by proposing the following recommendations:

- 1) A regional growth level not to exceed 5.5 million people by 1980 is a reasonable planning figure for use by all official and voluntary agencies in the Bay Area.

\*\*ABAG can work with city and county governments to establish common growth objectives in relation to this figure.

\*\*These growth objectives can then provide a basis for staging urban growth (1980 the first stage) to be reflected in land use plans, Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) guidelines, and zoning ordinance.

\*\*Both objectives and stages for growth form a basis for guiding transportation, sewer, water, power and other urban servicing agencies in their planning efforts.

- 2) Regional growth to the year 2000 will probably range between 6.2 and 8.8 million people, but policy decisions made in the next few years can direct the level and location of population growth within this range.

\*\*Using these broad figures, three possible growth rates - slow, moderate, and rapid - and their projected land use patterns can be isolated and their impacts on community and regional resources, costs, and quality of life can be assessed.

\*\*Once the consequences of alternative growth rates are studied, citizens can make educated choices concerning the shape of their future.

\*\*The process of developing a regional growth policy, since it must directly involve many agencies, can build an effective coordinating mechanism that assures the realization of planning objectives.



## CONCLUSION

To carry out effectively the resolution of ABAG's General Assembly, the assumption has to be made that some control has to be imposed on unrestricted regional growth. The two key regional policies that this paper has explored are:

- 1) There is a need for limitations on economic growth.
- 2) Cities and counties should limit their growth to the 1980 guidelines proposed in this paper. (See Table on page 6).

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